



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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More help for care homes with lowest staffing levels

Province rolls out \$20 million to hire more care aides in first phase of staffing plan

The NDP government has committed \$20 million to hire more care aides at residential care sites with the lowest staffing levels.

The funds are available immediately and will be used exclusively to create full-time care aide positions by converting casual and part-time positions.

The \$20 million is in addition to \$548 million in new funds for seniors' care contained in last week's budget. These funds will improve residential care staffing levels as well other seniors' care services, including home care and assisted living, over the next three years.

HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside says the union has been meeting with government and health employers to ensure a smooth implementation of the new funding.

"Government has been clear that this first round of funding is targeted for full-time care aide positions," says Whiteside. "If members believe new money is being diverted for other uses, they should contact their servicing representative."

Whiteside noted both B.C.'s Seniors Advocate and the Minister of Health have called for increased transparency and accountability for new funding.

"I believe that our concern that new funds go to front-line care, not to profits or administration, has been heard at the highest levels," says Whiteside.

Addressing the staffing crisis is a key demand of HEU's *Care Can't Wait* campaign.

"After all of the hard work put into this campaign by HEU members and supporters, it's encouraging to see our new NDP government implement these demands," says Whiteside.

"Converting positions to full-time will improve staffing, but it's clear that more care staff need to be trained. To keep these workers, we must provide stable work and good wages.

"Moving to end the practices of contracting out and contract flipping would ensure job security in the sector while assuring continuity of care for our elderly."

Currently, only 15 per cent of long-term residential facilities are funded to meet the guideline of 3.36 hours of direct care per individual per day.

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